



The Insider

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Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

July 23, 2004

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and for giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

Marge Notte 1946—2004

First Lady of Sterling Heights

Marge Notte, the wife of Sterling Heights Mayor Richard Notte, died July 2nd after fighting valiantly against cancer since December. She was 58 years old. Marge was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother, a good friend, a great sister, and a significant influence on all she encountered.

I got to know Marge only a few years ago, but my wife Roma and I always enjoyed her company. She was straightforward in her dealings, with a biting wit and sharp tongue. If Marge didn't like what you did, she'd tell you to your face. And she was a lot of fun to be around, as her collection of girlfriends, the Golden Girls, could attest to. I suspect the Golden Girls, a sort of Ya-Ya Sisterhood that included Judge Kim Wiegand, Chamber of Commerce head Lil Adams, and Sterling Heights Community Relations Director Pat Lehman, could tell some wild tales if they wanted. Instead they set up a women's charity in Marge's honor.

Marge was a woman of considerable political skill. I remember sitting in her kitchen one evening and eavesdropping on a conversation she was having with one of the Sterling Heights "Redshirt" residents bitterly opposed to the noise from Freedom Hill Park. Mayor Notte and the Council had taken their side and fought to protect the residents, but the court case was not going well.

Many politicians would have stressed how hard they were fighting for the residents, blamed the judge or claimed corruption. They would have taken the easy way out by putting themselves in the best light, everyone else in the worst, and telling the resident what he or she wanted to hear.

But Marge was tougher and more honest than that.

She told the resident that the council believed in the justice of the case, but that it owed a responsibility to all the other residents of the city, too. The council had to balance the escalating cost and reduced probability of success in the fight to determine what would be a fair resolution. Marge never manipulated constituents but rather always worked to educate and lead.

She was an invaluable political asset to her husband, offering sagacious advice and great organizational skills. “You know, it’s always we women who do all the work,” she pointed out to me during one campaign. “You men just get all the credit.” Although I find Dick incredibly organized, Marge maintained that men were generally poorly organized beings. She used to look at me when she said that.

She and Dick were a great match. It was the second marriage for both of them, and they shared incredible inner strength. Sadly, they needed it, as Dick lost a child of his first marriage and Marge and Dick’s daughter, Annie, died tragically in a train accident.

But they endured, even giving birthday parties for Annie in the years after she died. These parties weren’t maudlin affairs, but celebrations. All Annie’s friends came.

Dick and I were sitting in the Sterling Heights Library, holding our office hours one night, when he received a panicky call from Marge. She had lost control of her arm, which was flailing, and she was shaken and needed to see a doctor. Dick left immediately. Marge was soon diagnosed with lung and brain cancer in its late stages. In a courageous decision characteristic of her, Marge decided to forego aggressive chemotherapy and radiation treatments in the hope of living her remaining days more fully.

I visited Marge during this time and she was a marvel. She was matter-of-fact about her condition and realistic about her prospects, yet she had things she wanted to do. Our conversations never centered on her or her illness. She lived far longer than the doctors predicted. During her illness, she and Dick sold their house and bought a condominium. She was determined to live long enough to move into the new condo and to get Dick settled and properly organized.

The day they moved in, Marge was fully engaged, directing the movers and making sure the house was set up right. By all accounts, she did a great job. It must have been exhausting. Marge had met her goal, successfully concluding her bargain with cancer on her own terms. The day after the move, Marge lapsed into a coma, dying several days later.

At the funeral mass, Lil Adams read from the apostle Paul’s letter to Timothy:

The hour of my dissolution is at hand, for I am already being poured out as a drink offering. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

I sat with Councilwoman Barb Ziarko at the funeral luncheon. Barb saw to it that everyone at the table was served Marge’s favorite drink, vodka and orange, *no ice*, and led a toast to her, announcing, “This drink shall here forward be known as the *Marge Notte*.”

You led a good life.
Here’s to ya, Marge.

Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Every other Tuesday at 6:05 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 18)

*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

Coffee Hours

*Please note that since the District Office is in Roseville, I do not have coffee hours in Roseville. I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. Everyone is welcome at the coffee hours.

**August 2, Sept. 13
7-9 p.m.**

Location: Sterling Heights Public Library
(40255 Dodge Park)

**August 30
7-9 P.M.**

Location: Clinton Township Public Library
(35891 Gratiot, north of 15 Mile)

Contact My Office

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